

Law Enforcement, Con/Ed, and State Parks

To date, Congressional wording of legislation has not allowed, or has limited, the direct allocation of SWG funds to projects pertaining to law enforcement, outreach, or activities in state parks. This does not mean that opportunities do not exist for developing projects within these areas that would provide benefits to species and habitats in greatest need of conservation. In fact, activities of this type have already been and continue to be conducted within each of these areas without SWG funding. Law enforcement officers regularly use domestic livestock to assist fisheries biologists with the transport of arctic grayling and cutthroat trout for restoration projects occurring in wilderness and remote areas of the state. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks conservation education staff have been instrumental in helping develop information strategies for the SWG planning efforts and are actively involved in issues related to many species and habitats described in this Strategy such as loons, native fish, and invasive species that require intense education and information campaigns in order to address human-related conservation concerns. Montana's state parks have been involved with the recent inventory of small mammals, bats, and other wildlife species that have been identified as in greatest need and offer an unequalled venue for communicating the foundations of comprehensive conservation to Montana's public through interpretation and hands-on experience. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks firmly believes that the successful implementation of this Strategy will require that law enforcement, conservation education, and state parks be engaged in activities and be eligible for funding.

The following list is intended to provide examples of how these areas of FWP could be integrated with the implementation of the FWP Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy. The list is not complete, but should provide an idea of the diversity of opportunity that exists and will be required.

Law Enforcement

- Investigation and prosecution of individuals who seek to profit through the commercial exploitation of sensitive species or species of special concern
- Regular patrols, presence, and covert operations in areas where sensitive species projects (such as brood stock ponds or in-channel spawning and rearing areas for native fish) and efforts are in progress
- Investigate and prosecute illegal introductions of fish and wildlife and provide an enforcement presence in areas where the transportation of live fish to other bodies of water is suspected to occur
- Through SWG, augment financial resources through overtime and other means, for special species-related projects that merit an enhanced presence or protection by law enforcement officers

- Participate in the planning and management of sensitive species, offering social component information in season setting, season types, or special regulations for certain areas that would serve to enhance certain game species of concern
- Utilize relationships built with other resource agency's law enforcement and wildlife control divisions in the protection and enhancement of sensitive species
- Focus attention on violations associated with snowmobiles, ATVs, and water-based recreation that directly affect fish and wildlife and their habitats during certain times of the year
- Expand investigations and prosecution of individuals involved in the introduction of non-native or exotic plants and animals
- Continue a leadership role in the on-the-ground efforts to resolve conflicts between wildlife and humans (bears, ungulates in urban environments, etc.) and develop new technologies, equipment, and approaches to reduce the effects of wildlife damage to private property
- Provide equipment and technical expertise in the logistics of transporting personnel, equipment, and fish/wildlife species in restoration efforts
- Provide increased field assistance as well as informational support to biologists in the implementation of fish and wildlife inventories, tagging and marking operations, etc.
- Dovetail efforts with the Conservation Education Division in preparing sensitive species issues presentations in public forums such as hunter education classes, school programs, and the media. Work with biologists to conduct inventory of fish and wildlife through tagging, investigation of illegal kills and harvest, and road kills. Special opportunities exist in wilderness and remote areas where officers can provide domestic livestock for transportation. Opportunities exist at check stations and especially with species such as wolves, raptors, and furbearers.
- Work directly with biologists with species-related issues such as disease and reintroduction
- Help conserve habitats by addressing issues related to snowmobiles and ATVs, no-wake zones, exotic introductions of plants and animals, human/bear and wolf conflicts, 310 permit violations

Conservation Education

The mission of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is to provide for the stewardship of the fish, wildlife, parks, and recreational resources of Montana, while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations. To carry out its mission, FWP's Conservation Education Division strives to provide and support fiscally responsible programs that help Montanans and others understand and appreciate the importance of the conservation and management of Montana's:

- Aquatic ecosystems, habitats, and species
- Terrestrial ecosystems, habitats, and species
- Important cultural and recreational resources

Under the CFWCS, FWP conservation education will focus on programs to:

- Provide aquatic education and informational materials and programs to the public and to schools and teachers
- Develop, refine, and expand native fish species programs
- Provide information about the problems caused by illegal introductions
- Conduct aquatic education and comprehensive fisheries management training for FWP staff
- Enhance the stewardship of public and private lands and their wildlife inhabitants through education
- Increase knowledge of species identified as being in greatest conservation need
- Provide wildlife-oriented informational and educational efforts to meet hunting and nonhunting public needs and to address changing social conditions
- Offer education and information programs to help people learn to live with all wildlife and reduce wildlife/human conflicts

State Parks

- Provide sites for the inventory of fish and wildlife species on state park properties
- Work with FWP's Conservation Education Division to create interpretive programs that inform the public about comprehensive conservation

- Provide programs that educate and inform the public about the species and habitats in greatest need of conservation and what conservation activities need to occur in order to conserve them